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 DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 ACTION MEMORANDUM

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S/S

November 18, 1980

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TO: The Secretary (Entire Text)

THROUGH: The Deputy Secretary

FROM: ARA - William G. Bowdler *wub*
 HA - Patricia Derian

SUBJECT: Request for Meeting by the Secretary with
 Nobel Peace Prize Winner Perez Esquivel

SUMMARY

The Washington Office on Latin America has requested a meeting for Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Adolfo Perez Esquivel with the Secretary on November 19 or 20 (Tab A). He is in the U.S. to attend the OASGA as part of a tour sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation in cooperation with the U.S. Catholic Conference and the National Council of Churches. Perez Esquivel was named the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize recipient for his non-violent advocacy of human rights. He is director in Argentina of the "Service for Peace and Justice in Latin America", an ecumenical peace and human rights group. He was imprisoned in 1977 without charge or trial for fifteen months and reportedly tortured by the present military government. He was a high-interest U.S. case in 1977-1978. The State Department recommended that the President send a congratulatory message to Mr. Esquivel. Action has been held up pending award of the prize (December 10 - Human Rights Day).

HA believes that a meeting with you or the Deputy Secretary in the interim will have important symbolic significance in affirming our continual support of human rights and in acknowledging our previous high-interest in this case.

ARA opposes a meeting with either you or the Deputy Secretary until after the politically and emotionally charged issue of the IAHR's human rights report on Argentina has been considered by the OAS General Assembly and until we learn more about Perez Esquivel's political views. Perez Esquivel is already scheduled to meet separately with Assistant Secretaries Bowdler and Derian.

Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP

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ANALYSIS OF ISSUESHA Position:

Mr. Esquivel's presence in Washington presents our Government with an excellent opportunity to express its congratulations to an internationally-recognized spokesman of human rights who exemplifies the kind of non-violent advocacy which we seek to encourage. It is because of his non-violent role in Argentina and its relevance internationally that the Nobel Committee awarded him the Peace Prize. The U. S. for the same reasons should acknowledge this role and not hesitate to give recognition to it.

Mr. Esquivel was a high-interest U. S. case. Our Embassy in Buenos Aires made many demarches on his behalf following his arrest and detention without charge or trial. Upon his release to house arrest in January 1978, he immediately telephoned our Embassy to express his appreciation for USG support. Receiving Mr. Esquivel at a high level will affirm our continued interest.

When Perez Esquivel was named recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, the Department recommended that the President send a congratulatory message to him. The White House agreed to do so on December 10, Human Rights Day, the actual date the Prize will be awarded.

From the beginning, support for human rights has been a keystone of this Administration's policy. Receiving Mr. Esquivel will convey the message that our firm commitment to human freedom and dignity is a continuing one. Failure to see Perez Esquivel could be broadly publicized and would imply an abandonment of our human rights principles.

Receiving Mr. Esquivel will not jeopardize our other interests. His statements to date on Argentina have been moderate and constructive. In Santiago, he condemned terrorism, the invasion of Afghanistan, and expressed support of Beagle Channel mediation. His role at the OAS is unofficial. Given the GOA's already successful campaign against a meaningful resolution on the IAHR report on Argentina, our receiving him will confirm that we stand in support of constructive OAS action on Argentina. The GOA, for all intents and purposes, has already ensured that there will be no country specific resolution in Argentina.

ARA Position:

We are concerned over the timing of the proposed meetings with Perez Esquivel in view of the scheduling of

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his visit to coincide with the OASGA and in light of his recent statements against U. S. interests.

It is clear that the human rights groups sponsoring Perez Esquivel's visit have timed his presence in Washington to coincide with the OAS General Assembly as it addresses the IAHR's human rights report on Argentina. Perez Esquivel is expected to call for Assembly condemnation of Argentina while we have stressed a positive and constructive outcome without condemnation. To the extent that it reinforces Perez Esquivel's views, a Seventh Floor meeting would be counterproductive to our efforts to seek consensus on a constructive resolution dealing with the report.

Our Embassy in Buenos Aires believes that Perez Esquivel's recent highly political remarks against the GOA have increased the GOA's conviction that the Nobel Committee's award was made as part of an international effort designed to destabilize the present Argentine government. The GOA believes that this is the principal objective of the presence of Perez Esquivel and the other human rights and exile groups at the OASGA. Perez Esquivel's stay in Washington will be highly visible, marked by television and press interviews; his comment against the Argentine Government will be reported extensively in Argentina. A meeting between Perez Esquivel and you or the Deputy Secretary, when viewed by the Argentines within the context of the emotionally charged atmosphere at the OASGA, will likely cause them to intensify their efforts against the IAHR, increase polarization at the OASGA, and could contribute to the GOA making good on its threat to walk out of the OAS.

Finally, we are concerned over Perez Esquivel's emerging political viewpoints. Our Embassy in Buenos Aires reports that, in a November 13 ceremony in Buenos Aires in his honor, Perez Esquivel:

- denounced multinational corporations for their role in inequities in the world economic order;
- strongly criticized GOA economic performance in contrast to our views that GOA policies were returning the country to a free enterprise system; and
- accused the GOA of maintaining an "unjust social order" through its limitations on freedom.

Earlier Perez Esquivel, in announcing he would travel to El Salvador, blamed the industrialized countries for supplying arms to "support unjust structures to the detriment of the people".

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Perez Esquivel's remarks, thus far only obliquely critical of the U. S., appear to be aimed against U. S. economic and political policies in El Salvador and elsewhere in Central and South America. A meeting with you or the Deputy Secretary now could prove embarrassing later on if Perez Esquivel steps up the rhetoric against U. S. interest.

EVALUATION OF OPTIONS

Option 1:

Approve a meeting between you and Perez Esquivel. (HA supports, ARA and USOAS oppose.)

Option 2:

Approve a meeting with the Deputy Secretary. (HA supports, ARA and USOAS oppose.)

Option 3:

That neither you nor the Deputy Secretary meet with him. (ARA and USOAS support, HA opposes.)

PRO: (Supports Options 1 and 2)

-- Reaffirms the U. S. commitment to human rights by supporting the recognition which Perez Esquivel already has received worldwide for his non-violent human rights advocacy.

-- Calls attention to continuing concern over human rights violations in Argentina.

-- Demonstrates our support for meaningful and constructive OAS action in the wake of the GOA's clearly successful campaign against such actions.

-- Failure to see Perez Esquivel could be broadly publicized by human rights groups and would imply an abandonment of our principles, discouraging those who have joined the U. S. in human rights advocacy.

-- Is consistent with Administration policy to meet with and exchange views with opposition leaders and human rights advocates.

-- Would be consistent with White House decision to send congratulatory letter when Nobel Prize is awarded.

-- Failure of a senior official to meet Perez Esquivel will not go unnoticed and could be interpreted that the U. S. has already begun to shift its policies in anticipation of a presumed de-emphasis of human rights in the new Administration.

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-- Refusal to see Perez Esquivel would suggest that U. S. policy is being held hostage to Argentina's sensitivities.

CON: (Supports Option 3)

-- Would increase polarization at the OASGA, lessen the chances for a constructive human rights resolution on Argentina at the OAS, and could contribute to the GOA making good on its threat to walk out of the OAS.

-- Would add to the GOA belief that the U. S. is participating in an effort to destabilize the Argentine Government.

-- Could work against U. S. policies in Latin America in view of Perez Esquivel's social and economic views.

-- Is unnecessary in view of the Bowdler and Derian meetings which would reaffirm the U. S. commitment toward human rights and support Administration policy to meet with opposition and human rights leaders.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That you meet with Perez Esquivel without participation by his sponsoring organization. (Favored by HA, opposed by ARA, USOAS.)

Approve: _____

2. That the Deputy Secretary meet with Perez Esquivel. (Favored by HA, opposed by ARA, USOAS.)

Approve: _____

3. That neither you nor the Deputy Secretary meet with him. (Favored by ARA and USOAS, opposed by HA.)

Approve: _____

Attachment:

1. Tab A - letter from Washington Office on Latin America.

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DRAFTED: HA/HR: R^{RS}Jorgenson/ARA: G^WJWhitman: fdg
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CONCURRENCES: USOAS: M^{GW}Yohn

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November 4, 1980

The Honorable Edmund Muskie
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D. C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate for 1980, will be visiting the United States during the third week in November. Mr. Perez Esquivel, Secretary General of the "Service for Peace and Justice in Latin America" headquartered in Buenos Aires, will be in Washington, D. C. November 19-20 to discuss his work for human rights, peace and social justice through non-violent means in Latin America and Argentina.

Perez Esquivel, a former professor of architecture and Roman Catholic lay leader, has been actively involved in the formation and continuing work of other church affiliated human rights and social action groups including: "Coordinator of Christian Groups and Organizations," "Ecumenical Movement for Human Rights," and the "Permanent Assembly for Human Rights."

Perez Esquivel's selection represents an important gesture on the part of the Nobel Committee which draws world attention to the work of all individuals dedicated to a non-violent struggle for peace, human rights and social justice.

We are writing to request an appointment with you for Adolfo Perez Esquivel on November 19 or 20.

Respectfully awaiting your response.

Cordially yours,

Kathryn Sikkink
Kathryn Sikkink

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